

## Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAB-01 SAM-01 /060 W

----- 012717

R 050505Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4735

INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : PINT, TC

SUBJECT : SHAIKH ZAYED STATES HE WILL STEP DOWN AS PRESIDENT OF UAE

REF: (A) ABU DHABI 1896, (B) ABU DHABI 1450

1. LAST THREE DAYS LOCAL PRESS-FIRST AUG 2 AND 3, DAILY "AL WAHDA", AND NOW AUG 4, GOVERNMENT DAILY "AL ITTIHAD" -- HAVE BEEN HEADLINING INTERVIEW WHICH UAE PRESIDENT SHAIKH ZAYED GAVE TO GULF NEWS IN BAHRAIN IN WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD NOT CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT AT END HIS FIVE-YEAR TERM THIS DECEMBER. LOCAL PRESS QUOTES ZAYED AS SAYING IN GULF NEWS INTERVIEW THAT HE WAS DISPLEASED OVER DECISION TO EXTEND PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION (REF A). ZAYED APPARENTLY CITED EXISTING INTERNAL SQUABBLING NOTING IN PARTICULAR ARGUMENT OVER INTERNAL EMIRATE BORDERS. ZAYED TERMED BORDERS AS ARTIFICIAL CARRYOVERS FROM COLONIAL DAYS, BUT STILL THE RULERS FIGHT OVER TENS OF METERS

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OF LAND AND DECISIONS ON WHERE TO BUILD HOSPITAL IS

DEFERRED BECAUSE OF DISPUTE OVER WHO OWNS LAND (READ DUBAI-SHARJAH DISPUTE, REF B). ZAYED STATED HE HAD SPENT ONE WEEK SHUTTLE BETWEEN RULERS TRYING TO SETTLE MATTER BUT TO NO AVAIL.

2. AL ITTIHAD AUG 4 CARRIES REPORTS FROM "AUTHORITATIVE" SOURCES CONFIRMING THAT ZAYED INTENDS STEP DOWN. SOURCES CLAIM THIS IS NOT POLITICAL MANEUVER, BUT THEN GO ON TO SAY THAT SHAIKH ZAYED WILL ONLY CHANGE HIS MIND IF CONDITIONS WHICH LED TO THIS DECISION ARE THEMSELVES CHANGED. SPECIFICALLY HE BELIEVES THERE MUST BE REAL EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY TO ENABLE PRESIDENT TO EXERCISE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES. THERE MUST BE ACTIVE LEADERSHIP WITH CAPABILITY TO FORCE COMPLIANCE WHEN DISPUTES ARISE.

3. PRESS REPORTS, WE BELIEVE QUITE ACCURATELY, THAT PUBLIC IS SHOCKED AND SURPRISED AT SHAIKH ZAYED'S DECISION. CERTAINLY EVERYONE ANTICIPATED THAT PRESIDENCY WOULD REMAIN WHERE IT WAS AND, AS WE REPORTED REF'S, CROWN PRINCE SHEKH CRANPFA EXPRESSED VIEW TO AMBASSADOR THAT THIS WAS ALMOST CERTAIN TO BE DECISION OF SUPREME COUNCIL. AL WAH CONTAINS STATEMENTS FROM NUMBER OF LEADERS OF OTHER EMIRATES INCLUDING TWO OF SHAIKH RASHID'S SONS -- PRIME MINISTER SHAIKH MAKTOUM AND MINDEFENSE SHAIKH MOHAMMAD--TO

EFFECT THAT ZAYED MUST CONTINUE, THAT HE IS ONLY ONE TO LEAD FEDERATION.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE DENIALS, THERE IS OBVIOUSLY STRONG ELEMENT OF POLITICAL MANEUVER IN ZAYED'S ANNOUNCEMENT, AND TIMING JUST BEFORE HE SETS OFF ON EXTENDED TRIP OUT OF COUNTRY OBVIOUSLY LEAVES POT BOILING AND PEOPLE GUESSING FOR SOME TIME TO COME. ON OTHER HAND, WE SUSPECT ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO REFLECTS PRESIDENT'S GENUINE FRUSTRATION AND ANGER. IF ON TOP OF FAILURE TO GET PERMANENT CONSTITUTION, ZAYED HAS IN FACT JUST FAILED TO GET DUBAI AND SHARJAH TO SETTLE THEIR BORDER DISPUTES (AND SUCH FAILURE IS QUITE POSSIBLE GIVEN NATURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF PERSONALITIES INVOLVED) HE MAY INDEED BE IN FED UP MOOD. WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK, HOWEVER, THAT HE SEES HIS WILLINGNESS TO CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT AS "WORTH SOMETHING" TO OTHER RULERS, AND THAT JUST FOR A CHANGE, HE IS GOING TO GET THAT "SOMETHING". THIS COULD BE CONCESSION IN FAVOR OF WILLINGNESS ON PART OF SHAIKH RASHID TO CONTRIBUTE TO FEDERAL BUDGET (HE HAS NOT YET DONE SO), GREATER AMENABILITY ON

PART OF RULERS TO CENTRALIZED COMMAND OF UAE'S MILITARY, OR THEIR WILLINGNESS TO RECONSIDER MOVING TO PERMANENT CONSTITUTION. UNDOUBTEDLY SHAIKH RASHID AND SAQR WILL HAVE SOME "MANEUVERS" OF THEIR OWN TO COUNTER WITH, BUT SINCE IT IS HARD TO SEE VIABLE ALTERNATIVE AT THIS TIME TO ZAYED AS PRESIDENT, THEY MAY GIVE SOME GROUND -- UNDOUBTEDLY AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE -- TO GET HIM TO STAY ON.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 AUG 1976  
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**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
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**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Film Number:** D760301-0738  
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**To:** STATE  
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